United Nations

Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General convenes task force to explore options on Somalia, following request from Security Council and meeting with United States Acting Secretary of State.

+ Secretary-General calls Joint Declaration of Namibe by Government of Angola and Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) "a positive step"; both parties fully accept validity of Angolan Peace Accords.

+ Secretary-General proposes to dispatch immediately a dozen military, police and civilian UNPROFOR personnel on exploratory mission to Macedonia, following request from Prime Minister of that country.

+ Tom Vraalsen of Norway, on mission to South Africa on behalf of Secretary-General, meets today with representatives of South African Government and African National Congress (ANC).

+ Secretary-General informs Security Council that physical demarcation of land part of Iraq-Kuwait boundary has been completed.

+ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and Government of Iran sign Memorandum of Understanding to assist, protect and seek solutions for nearly 3 million refugees in Iran.

+ International Day of Solidarity with Palestinian People to be commemorated at Headquarters on Monday.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali this morning convened a task force to explore options with regard to the situation in Somalia. The group consists of himself, Under-Secretaries-General James Jonah, Marrack Goulding, Jan Eliasson and Carl-August Fleischhauer, and his Executive Assistant, Alvaro de Soto.

The Secretary-General's Spokesman, Joe Sills, informed correspondents today that earlier in the week, Mr. Boutros-Ghali had expressed concern about

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the situation in Somalia in a letter to the Security Council. "The situation is not improving and the conditions that have developed in Somalia since the fall of the previous regime make it exceedingly difficult for the United Nations Operation to achieve the objectives approved by the Security Council", wrote the Secretary-General. He did not exclude the possibility that it might become necessary to review the basic premises and principles of the United Nations effort in Somalia.

On Wednesday afternoon, Mr. Boutros-Ghali had briefed the members of the Security Council on the situation in Somalia. He had also met with the Acting Secretary of State of the United States, Lawrence Eagleburger, with whom he discussed, amongst other subjects, certain ideas the United States Government had with respect to Somalia.

Later that evening, the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to prepare a detailed set of options on Somalia, including precise plans or ideas. It was on that set of options that he was currently working, with a view to presenting them to the Council early next week. The Spokesman said Mr. Boutros-Ghali would be bearing in the mind the overriding goal of ensuring that humanitarian assistance reach the starving people of Somalia.

Also today, the Secretary-General's Spokesman issued a note on the total number of peace-keeping troops to be deployed in Somalia. Of the 4,219 to be deployed, 655 - a Pakistani battalion - are already in the country. Approval has been given by the Somali representatives with whom the United Nations is negotiating for the deployment of a Canadian battalion of 750, scheduled to arrive in Mogadishu between 4 and 6 December.

Other countries which have agreed to supply troops include Belgium (550) and Egypt (750). Smaller contingents for specific tasks have been offered by Ireland (logistics), Australia (movement control), Pakistan (field hospital and signals), New Zealand (supplies) and Norway (Headquarter troops).

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In a statement issued today at Headquarters, Secretary-General's Spokesman said that Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali had welcomed the joint declaration made by the Government of Angola and the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), describing the agreements reached as "a positive step forward which could begin to rescue the country".

The declaration - called the joint "Declaration of Namibe" - was adopted following a meeting held yesterday by representatives of the Angolan Government and UNITA in the city of Namibe, in the presence of the Secretary-General's Special Representative in that country, Margaret Anstee, and observers of the Comissao Conjunta Politico-Militar.

The joint declaration underlines the commitment by both parties to fully accept the validity of the Angolan Peace Accord as "the only means of solving the Angolan problem"; to reiterate and effectively apply the cease-fire throughout the whole national territory and the immediate cessation of all

offensive movements; and to solicit the extension of UNAVEM II's mandate and call for its larger quantitative and qualitative involvement.

In today's statement, the Secretary-General's Spokesman also stressed that the joint declaration should now be backed by concrete and effective actions on both sides, "to demonstrate that the cessation of hostilities and their intentions to achieve a lasting solution are a reality". The Secretary-General was confident that the United Nations would be ready to continue and, if necessary, strengthen assistance to Angola. However, continued the statement, the basis for sustained peace, democracy and development could "only be assured by the Angolan parties themselves".

The Namibe meeting - the first to be held between representatives of the Angolan Government and UNITA since the fighting erupted on 31 October and 1 November following the elections in that country - came after talks were held by Miss Anstee with both parties in order to encourage them to return to the negotiating table. These meetings form part of the efforts being made by the United Nations to mediate a political solution to the current crisis in Angola.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has proposed to instruct the Force Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the former Yougoslavia to dispatch immediately a group of about a dozen military, police and civilian personnel on an exploratory mission to Macedonia. Their immediate mandate would be to visit Macedonia's border areas with Albania and Serbia and prepare a report on how a larger deployment of United Nations military and police personnel might help to strengthen security and confidence in Macedonia. Based on the report's findings, the Secretary-General could then make a recommendation to the Security Council for a more substantive deployment of UNPROFOR in Macedonia.

In a letter dated 23 November and addressed to the President of the Security Council, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali stressed that his decision followed a request for the deployment of United Nations observers in Macedonia, conveyed to him by Kiro Gligorov, President of Macedonia, on a visit to Headquarters on 11 November. The request was made out of Macedonian President's concern about the possible impact on his country of fighting elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia.

The Secretary-General went on to say that the Macedonian request had received support from Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, the Co-Chairmen of the Steering Committee of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, who both favored the very early deployment to Skopje - capital city of Macedonia - of a small group of UNPROFOR military and police observers, with supporting political staff.

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Tom Vraalsen, the Assistant Secretary-General of the Foreign Ministry of Norway who undertook a mission to South Africa on behalf of the

Secretary-General, reported that he held meetings today with representatives of the South African Government and the African National Congress (ANC).

In Pretoria he attended a working luncheon with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa, R.F. Botha, and members of the Foreign Ministry. In Johannesburg he met with two members of the ANC Executive Committee, Thabo Mbeki, the Director of International Affairs, and Aziz Pahad, the Deputy Director.

The Secretary-General asked Mr. Vraalsen to undertake the mission to South Africa, starting this past Monday, to assess how the United Nations' contribution to the peace process might be enhanced. In addition to meeting with representatives of various South African organizations, he was to be briefed by Angela King, Chief of the United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa (UNOMSA).

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The Secretary-General has informed the Security Council that the physical demarcation of the land part of the boundary between Iraq and Kuwait has been completed.

All pillars and associated markers for the entire length of the land part of the boundary have been installed and their emplacement checked and verified by the Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Demarcation Commission.

The Commission will proceed with the demarcation of the remainder of the boundary at its next session, to be held in Geneva from 14 to 16 December.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Government of Iran have signed a Memorandum of Understanding, agreeing to protect, assist and seek durable solutions for the close to 3 million refugees in Iran. The agreement formalizing their "working partnership" was signed today in Geneva by High Commissioner Sadako Ogata and Ambassador Sirous Nasseri of Iran.

According to the UNHCR press release, the signing of the document comes three days before UNHCR is scheduled to start assisting Afghan refugees repatriating from Iran. Under the repatriation programme, each Afghan will receive $25 in cash, 50 kilograms of wheat provided by the World Food Programme (WFP), and plastic sheeting when they pass the main border crossing at Dogharon, on the border between Afghanistan and Iran.

An agreement was signed less than a month ago between the two countries and UNHCR, to facilitate safe and orderly repatriation of Afghan refugees. So far this year, an estimated 250,000 have crossed back into Afghanistan from Iran.

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27 November 1992

A solemn meeting of the Committee on the Exercice of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People will be held on Monday, 30 November, to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

The International Day is observed annually in accordance with a General Assembly resolution adopted in 1977. All Member States, specialized agencies, observers and non-governmental organizations are invited to attend the meeting, which will be addressed by the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council, among others.

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